

What Really Determines Case Government in Old English?*

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1. Case Government in Old English Verbs Yet to Be Explained

One conspicuous difference between Old English (OE) and Modern English (ModE) is that compound verbs (CVs) in OE can be made very freely by combining a preposition and a verb. Moreover, unlike ModE in which the meanings of preposition-verb (P-V) CVs (e.g., *overcome*, *undermine*) are not usually obtained from their components in a compositional way,¹ most OE P-V CVs are more transparent so their meanings can be derived from the meanings of their parts. One may observe in this regard that many OE CVs behave compositionally in their argument subcategorization as well, that is, the prefix (i.e., P) as well as the head (i.e., V) contributes to the argument structure of the CV. Thus, unlike our general expectation

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¹ P represents a preverb (e.g., *wip* of OE *wip-awedan* or *over* of ModE *over-come*) which is assumed to be originally a preposition in its underlying representation, whereas V indicates a simplex verb (e.g., *awedan* of *wip-awedan* or *come* of *over-come*). Moreover, the following abbreviations are used throughout this paper: OE (ModE) = Old English (Modern English); NP = noun phrase; P-V CV = preposition-verb compound verb; Vi (Vt) = intransitive (transitive) verb; [acc] ([dat], [gen]) = accusative (dative, genitive); [ACC] ([DAT], [GEN]) = periphrastic prepositional accusative (dative, genitive); sb (sth) = somebody (something).

² In general, the head of a word is defined as one of the constituent elements of the word which determines the properties of the whole word. In OE P-V CVs, the right-hand member, as is well known, determines most important properties of the

about the behavior of the head and a nonhead,² many OE P-V CVs show that although the head V determines most of the morphosyntactic features of the whole CV, the valence of the CV is jointly determined by the head V and the nonhead P. This point is well demonstrated by the comparison of the respective case government of P-V CVs and their component V and P (Kim 1997).³ Consider the following examples:

(1) *gan* and *ymb-gan*

- a. se þe fylgeþ me ne gæþ he on þeostro
 he who follows me not goes he into darkness
 'he who follows me shall not go into darkness' (BiHom 103.31)
- b. *Ymb-eode* þa ides Helminga duguþe ond geogoþe
 around-went then lady of-Helmings veterans and youths
dæl æghwylcne,
 part each [acc]
 'then the lady of the Helmings went around every group of the
 veterans and the youths' (Beo 620-620)

(2) *ymb*

- a. Aras þa se rica, *ymb* hine rinc manig,
 rose then the noble around him [acc] man many
 'the noble and many a man around him rose up' (Beo 399)
- b. He ferde eft siððan *embe* sumere neode
 he went again afterwards about some need [dat]
 'afterwards he went again about some need' (ÆCHom ii. 508.15)

Gan in (1a) is an intransitive verb which does not take any object, whereas *ymb-gan* in (1b) is a transitive verb which takes an accusative object. Note that the preposition *ymb* takes an accusative or dative object in (2). The observation about the case government in (1) and (2) shows us that the

whole compound, including categorial features, morphological classes, and other inherent features such as tense, aspect, person, and number; the left-hand member P does not influence the determination of those features. Therefore, we can regard the right-hand member V as the head of the OE P-V CV and expect that this head will also determine other important features like the subcategorization of the whole compound.

³ Campbell (1959: §72 fn. 1) seems to be the first to observe the contribution of the prepositional prefix to the subcategorization of the whole compound verb in OE. This observation was also made by other studies such as de la Cruz (1973), Mitchell (1985: §§1065-1066), and Kim (1997).

subcategorization of the P is percolated to that of the whole CV. Furthermore, in these examples, we can see that the meaning of the CV is so transparent that it can be compositionally obtained from its constituent parts. Thus, the meaning of *ymb* 'around' combines with the meaning of *gan* 'to go' to produce the compositional meaning of the whole CV *ymb-gan* 'to go around.'

The following examples are more interesting because they show that a preposition combines with a transitive verb which can take its own NP object and that both the head and the nonhead contribute to the argument structure of the whole CV.⁴

(3) *cweðan* and *wiþ-cweðan*

- a. in leohte him þa word *cweþað*
 in light him [dat] those words [acc] speak
 'they will speak those words to him in glory' (Christ 401)
- b. gif inc hwa ðæs *wiþ-cweþe*
 if you-two [dat] anyone that [gen] contradicts
 'if anyone contradicts you about that' (BIHom 71.1)

Wiþ-cweðan 'to refuse, contradict' in (3b) is a ditransitive and takes dative and genitive at the same time, whereas *cweðan* 'to speak' can take either dative and accusative at the same time or accusative alone but never takes genitive. Therefore, we can infer that the genitive case would come from P and this is ascertained by the following examples showing the case government of *wiþ*, which takes genitive, dative, or accusative:

(4) *wiþ*

- a. micel liget fleah of ðære dune swilce flan
 great lightning flew from the mountain like arrows
wið þæs hæðenan folces
 against the heathen folk [gen]
 'great lightning flew from the mountain like arrows against the
 heathen folk' (ÆCHom i. 504.29)

⁴ Even though ditransitive P-Vt CVs such as *wiþ-cweðan*, in which P (*wiþ*) as well as V (*cweðan*) contributes to the subcategorization of the whole CV, do not seem to be very common in OE, OE does have instances of such P-Vt CVs and other languages including Greek and Latin show similar examples. Thus, *σμι-πέμπω* 'to send a person with another' in Greek comes from the preposition *σύν* 'with' and the simplex verb *πέμπω* 'to send a person/thing.' and *ἐπι-βουλεύω* 'to plot against a person < to plan (a thing) against a person' comes from the preposition *ἐπὶ* 'against' and the simplex verb *βουλεύω* 'to plan a thing.'

- b. se dæg cume þe he sceole *wið* þæm lichomon
 the day come that he must against the body [dat]
 hine gedælon
 him separate
 'the day shall come that he must separate himself from the
 body' (BIHom 97.20)
- c. he forðifep eall swa hwæt swa þes middangeard ær
 he forgives all whatsoever this world previously
wiþ hine æbyligða geworhte
 against him [acc] offenses made
 'he shall forgive all offenses whatsoever this world has previ-
 ously committed against him' (BIHom 9.12)

In connection with the case government of such OE P-V CVs, Kim (1997: 44-56) correctly observes that the CVs assign the case from the simplex V with the case assigned by the P as optional. What is interesting, however, is that some well-attested, ditransitive P-V compounds such as *wiþ-cweðan*, *wiþ-bregdan*, and *wiþ-standan* take only [dat, gen], although other combinations, as is expected from her proposal, are logically possible out of the two cases from a head verb (i.e., [acc] and [dat]) and the three cases from the nonhead P *wiþ* (i.e., [acc], [dat], and [gen]): [acc, acc], [acc, dat], [acc, gen], [dat, acc], [dat, dat].⁵

Although several studies such as Campbell (1959: §72 fn. 1), de la Cruz (1973: 161, 164), Mitchell (1985: §§1065-1066), Kim (1997) have noted the prepositional function of the prefix P in OE P-V CVs, correctly pointing out the contribution of the prefix to the argument structure of P-V CVs, none of them explain such peculiar case government of OE P-V CVs.

In particular, even though Kim (1997), in her discussion of OE P-V CVs, provides a way of making the head control the subcategorization inheritance by adopting the mechanism of argument attraction, which is proposed by Hinrichs and Nakazawa (1989, 1994), she still has to explain what really controls the subcategorization inheritance, resulting in such a peculiar case government pattern involved in OE verbs. Thus, this paper is aimed at providing a principled account of why a certain case is used for a P-V

⁵ V [case₁, case₂] indicates that the verb takes two NP arguments whose cases are [case₁] and [case₂], respectively, whereas V [case₁/case₂] means that the verb takes either an NP [case₁] or an NP [case₂].

compound when more than one case is logically possible, thereby addressing the issue of what, besides grammatical roles or functions, determines the case government of OE verbs.⁶

2. Relative Obliqueness and Case Government in Old English

2.1. What Really Distinguishes Morphological Cases in Old English?

There have been many studies which attempt to explain the syntactic and semantic contribution of OE morphological cases and most of those studies have tried to explain what the OE cases encode on the basis of traditional notions of case government. Thus, OE cases might be explained in terms of the grammatical relations they encode, that is, the nominative encodes subjects, the accusative direct objects, and the dative indirect objects. However, few of the accounts based on this traditional view have been very successful in explaining what OE cases really encode, because, although such accounts may be appropriate in many cases, they are inappropriate in many other instances, making it difficult to formulate a generalization which can be applied to various uses of OE non-subject cases. In particular, the object marking of many OE verbs is so variable that we can easily find such alternative case markings, as in (5), and they are often found in the same text or context, as in (6), or even in the same sentence, as in (7):

- (5) a. *ond ða folgode feorhgeniðlan*
 and then followed deadly-foes [acc/pl]
 'and then he pursued his deadlyfoes' (Beo 2928)
- b. *him folgiaþ fuglas*
 him [dat] follow birds
 'birds follow him' (Phoen 591)
- (6) a. *he þæt eal wipsacan wolde*
 he that [acc] all refuse would
 'he wished to refuse that all' (COE : LS 35 (Vitpatr) 85)

⁶ Another relevant question to be answered by any reasonable morphological theory which assumes the notion of the head will be how to explain the contribution of nonheads in subcategorization inheritance. See Kim (1997) and Goh (1998) for relevant discussions.

b. hwaðer he ealles þæs *wipsacan* wolde
 whether he all that [gen] refuse would
 'whether he wished to refuse all that' (COE : LS 35 (Vitpatr) 81)

(7) a. se fæder *wiðsoc* his bearne, and þæt bearn *wiðsoc*
 the father renounced his child [dat] and that child rejected
þone fæder, and æt nextan ælc freond *wiðsoc* oðres,
 the father [acc] and at last each friend refused another[gen]
 'the father renounced his child, and the child rejected the father,
 and then all friends refused each other' (ÆLS i. 23. 110)

b. *gefylgdon* hine vel him
 followed him [acc] or him [dat]
 'they followed him or him' (Lindisf. Gosp. [Plank (1983)])

The above examples clearly show that a verb varies in assigning a case to its direct object without involving any important difference in grammatical relationship and meaning in kind. How can we explain these alternative case markings for the same verb? Should we say that it is just a free variation which doesn't make any significant difference? One might argue that such alternations in OE object case marking come from uncertainties in the use of OE object cases and that they especially reflect the loss of case distinction in relatively late texts. However, this does not seem to be the case, since such variation in object cases is extremely pervasive in the early OE period and characteristic even of other early Germanic languages (Plank 1983: 246).

Although grammatical roles and functions are variably encoded in OE cases, there are two rigid distinctions among OE NPs with respect to their cases and governors. Above all, there is a strict distinction among the NP arguments of a verb, especially between accusative NPs and NPs in other cases, which can be clearly seen in their behavior in passivization.⁷ OE has a syntactic passive like ModE.⁸ The norm for this OE passive is that the

⁷ This strict distinction between accusative and other cases can also be applied to NP arguments of prepositions since OE P-V CVs such as *ymb-sprecan*, *ymb-locian*, *wiþ-springan*, *wiþ-fleogan*, etc. whose sole arguments come from the prefix will show the same difference in passivization. That is, even though a prepositional argument cannot be passivized at all in OE, an inherited argument (from P) in P-V CVs does not have any problem with passivization even in OE.

⁸ OE has two ways to represent the passive. That is, besides the syntactic passive,

accusative object of the active verb becomes the subject of the passive for the so-called personal passive, as in (8a). Otherwise, the impersonal passive is the rule. That is, when an active verb takes a dative or genitive NP object, the NP has to remain in the oblique case without becoming the subject of the passive sentence, as in (8b) and (8c).

- (8) a. *he* *mid eotenum* *wear* *on feonda gewæld*
 he [nom] *among giants* *became* *into enemy's power*
 forð *forlacen*
 further *betrayed*
 'among the giants, he was well betrayed into the power of the
 enemy' (Beo 902-903)
- b. *Him* *weorþeð* *blæd* *gifen!*
 him [dat] *became* *glory* *given*
 'he was given glory' (Christ 877)
- c. *Forðæm se ðe his* *ær* *time* *ne* *tiolað,*
 because *his* [gen] *before* *time* *not* *provide (for)*
 þonne bið *his* *on* *tid* *untilað,*
 then (it) *is* *his* [gen] *on* *time* *unprovided*
 'because they will not provide for him before time it will be
 unprovided in respect of him when the time comes'
 (Bo 67. 11 [Mitchell 1985: §849])⁹

This distinction between accusative NPs and dative or genitive NPs must have been extremely strong since no reasonable evidence has been found that this rule has exceptions. Thus, OE does not even have the indirect passive (i.e., the passive type *I was told a story*), which means only an accusative NP can become a passive subject. Clear examples of the indirect

there is one OE verb which has a synthetic passive, that is, *hatte* 'is (was) called'. On the other hand, Impersonal *man* for indefinite agency is often used in the nominative singular with an active verb form as an equivalent of the passive voice.

⁹ Although the OE verb *ti(o)lian* 'to strive after, provide (for)' takes genitive, example (8c), which Mitchell provides as an example of the impersonal passive for a genitive object, may be problematic because the word *untilað* 'unprovided' can be regarded as an adjective rather than a past participle. Unlike the impersonal passive for the dative object, clear examples of the impersonal passive for the genitive object seem to be rare (McLaughlin 1983: 62). This rareness is compatible with the distinction between the dative case and the genitive case, which is reflected in the obliqueness hierarchy proposed in (13).

passive begin to appear in the late 14th century and they remain rare until late in the 15th century (Mustanoja 1960: 440–1, Denison 1993: ch. 6), as in (9):

- (9) a. Item as for the Parke she is a lowyd Every yere a dere and xx
 Coupull of Conyes and all fewell Wode to her necessarye To be
 Takyn in a Wode callidde Grenedene Wode.
 'Item: as for the park, she is allowed a deer each year and
 twenty pairs of rabbits and all fuel wood [= firewood] nec-
 essary for her, to be taken in a wood called Greendene Wood'
 (1375 Award Blount in ORS 7.205.30 [Denison 1993: 110])
- b. playnly þu art forbodyn boþe
 plainly you are forbidden both
 (?c1450 (?a1400) Wycl. Clergy HP 383.34 [Denison 1993: 111])

This distinction in the passivization possibilities of verbal arguments is also maintained even when one and the same verb has two different sets of NPs as its arguments, as in the examples below. Note that the different argument structures are associated with different meanings of the verb, which are illustrated in (10) and (11), respectively.¹⁰

- (10) *ofteon*₁ 'to take/deny a thing [acc] from/to a person [dat]'
- a. ... þæt ðam godum þe hit gehealdan willað,
 ... that to the good [pl/dat] who it to hold wish,
 ne sy *oftogen* seo gastlice deopnyss
 not may-be denied the spiritual profoundness [nom]
 '... that to the good (people) who wish to hold it, the spiritual
 profundity may not be denied' (ÆCHom ii. 96.4)
- b. ðe bið seo bodung *oftogen*
 you [dat] is the message [nom] denied
 'the preachin shall be denied to you' (ÆCHom ii. 530.30)
- (11) *ofteon*₂ 'to deprive a person [dat] of a thing [gen]'
- a. ... ac him wæs ða *oftogen* ælces fodean six dagas
 ... but them [dat] was then deprived everyfood [gen] six days
 '... but then they were deprived of all food for six days'
 (ÆCHom i. 570.30)

¹⁰ The examples are from Mitchell (1985: §858) but the ModE translation is mine.

- b. Blind sceal his eagna þolian,
 blind must his eyes dispense with,
oftigen biþ him torhtre gesihþe
 deprived is him [dat] clear vision [gen]
 'a blind man must dispense with his eyes (and) he is deprived
 of clear vision' (Max i. 39)

On the other hand, OE has another conspicuous distinction between verbal arguments and prepositional arguments, which is also clearly revealed in passivization. That is, passivization in OE is allowed only for a verbal argument. In other words, there is no prepositional passive in OE, at least, not in the same form as the ModE prepositional passive. Thus, OE does not have the passive type *He was laughed at*. This type of passive begins to appear about 1225, but remains rare until the end of the 14th century (Denison 1985, 1993: ch.7).¹¹

- (12) a. Bot nu an am i *after* send
 'but now when I am after sent (= sent for)'
 (a1400 (a1325) Cursor 14216 [Denison 1993: 126])
 b. Litel is he loid or *lete* by þat suche a lessoun techþ
 'he is little loved or thought of who teaches such a lesson'
 (c1400 (a1376) PPl. A (1) 11. 29 [Denison 1993: 126])

In sum, there were two strict distinctions among OE NPs: one is among the NP arguments of the same head or governor with respect to their cases and the other is between verbal arguments and prepositional arguments. We might give the label Ω to the property that makes possible this distinction among OE NPs and then we can say that the easier it is for an NP to be passivized, the less Ω that NP is. Then by using this property Ω , we can describe the above two distinctions among OE NPs with respect to their morphological cases and governors as follows: first, accusative NPs are less than Ω dative or genitive NPs, and second, regardless of their cases, NPs are less Ω when they are verbal arguments than when they are prepositional arguments.

¹¹ The prepositional passive is not found in what Denison calls "Standard Average European," which still has different morphological cases for NPs just as in OE, though there is something similar in mainland Scandinavian languages (Denison 1993: 125).

2.2. An Obliqueness Hierarchy among Old English NP Arguments

The property Ω or the distinction among OE NPs in terms of Ω seems to be very closely related to the notion of 'obliqueness'. The notion of 'obliqueness' can roughly be defined as follows: the less oblique an NP argument is, the more central it is for the meaning or relationship expressed by the head (i.e., verb) of the relevant VP and the more likely it is for it to be selected by the head.¹²

Above all, OE accusative NPs are more likely to be selected by a verb than dative or genitive NPs. According to Mitchell (1985: §1092),¹³ OE has a very small number of verbs (about 180 verbs in his list) which take genitive or dative, whereas there are a great number of transitive verbs, which can take accusative alone or along with other cases. That is, the accusative case is much more likely to be selected by a verb than any other object cases and thus accusative NPs can be considered less oblique than dative or genitive NPs.

Similarly, the common object case (= [ACC]) in ModE, which roughly corresponds to accusative in OE, can be considered less oblique than prepositional dative (= [DAT]) and genitive (= [GEN]), which are often represented by *for*+ or *to*+NP phrases and *of*+NP phrases, respectively (i.e., periphrastic dative and genitive (Mustanoja 1960: 74, 95)), because the direct object is much more likely to be selected by a verb and also because when an NP [ACC] (usually as a direct object) and a PP [DAT/GEN] occur together, the NP [ACC] is obligatory, while the prepositional dative or genitive NP is often optional.

On the other hand, it seems to be generally admitted that verbal arguments are less oblique than prepositional arguments in the sense that they are more central for the relationship expressed by the head verb of a sentence and more likely to be selected by the head. Thus, prepositional phrases (PPs) in ModE are usually less central and often optional and prepositional arguments are more difficult to passivize than verbal arguments. This is still true even when along with a verbal argument a PP

¹² Although the notion of obliqueness has been quite widely assumed or employed in many linguistic studies, its definition does not seem to have been clearly given in any previous studies.

¹³ Visser (1963-73: §§323, 378-392) shows a similar list of OE verbs which take dative or genitive.

can be selected as a complement by the head verb, as in *John gave a book to Mary*, because for most native speakers, the omission of the PP (*to Mary*) is more tolerable than that of the verbal argument (*a book*), not to mention the difference in passivization.

Moreover, among prepositional NP arguments, NPs indicating 'time' (e.g., *at the time*) seem to be very difficult to passivize or to move out of PP to leave their governor (i.e., preposition) stranded in *wh*-relative clauses, whereas NPs indicating 'place' are relatively easy to passivize (e.g., *The room was slept in*) or can easily bring about prepositional stranding in *wh*-relative clauses.¹⁴ This likeliness of being passivized seems to be closely related to the obliqueness of an NP, because prepositional arguments indicating 'place' can be considered less oblique than those indicating 'time' in the sense that the former can be selected by some verbs such as *put*, while few verbs subcategorize for the latter.

In short, the property Ω , which made possible the strict distinctions among OE NPs with respect to their morphological cases and governors, is closely related to the obliqueness of NPs. Since the distinctions among OE NP arguments so far considered are based on passivization possibilities, which in turn are often related to the notion of 'obliqueness',¹⁵ let us say that the easier it is for an NP to be passivized, the less oblique that NP is. Thus, in terms of the notion of obliqueness, the distinctions among OE NPs can be described as follows: first, accusative NPs are less oblique than dative or genitive NPs, and second, regardless of cases, verbal arguments are less oblique than prepositional arguments. On the basis of this generalization about OE NPs and their relative obliqueness, I propose the following 'obliqueness hierarchy' (OH) among OE NP arguments with respect to their cases and governors:¹⁶

¹⁴ For the difference in prepositional stranding, compare *This is the place which I ate dinner at* with *??This is the time which I ate the dinner at*.

¹⁵ For example, Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar assumes that passive is an operation on grammatical relations that demotes (the least oblique) subject arguments and, in many cases, additionally promotes more oblique syntactic dependents (e.g., the second least oblique, primary objects in English) to subject status (Pollard & Sag 1994: 119). This relational view of passivization is shared by many theoretical frameworks such as Relational Grammar (Perlmutter & Postal 1977, 1983), Arc Pair Grammar (Johnson & Postal 1980, Postal 1986), Lexical Functional Grammar (Bresnan 1982a, 1982b), Generalized Phrase Structure Grammar (Gazdar 1982, Gazdar et al. 1985) and Categorical Grammar (Dowty 1982a, 1982b).

¹⁶ The representation of the grammatical relation by means of relative obliqueness

- (13) Obliqueness Hierarchy of Morphological Cases for Old English NP arguments¹⁷
- a. Nom (subject) < Acc < Dat ≤ Gen
 - b. Verbal arguments < Prepositional arguments

2.3. An Enriched Interpretation of the Case Feature for Old English Verbs

Compounding, in this paper, is defined as “the creation of new words through a more syntactic combination of pre-existing (full) words” (Anderson 1992: 399). This typical definition, above all, means that the original fundamental syntactic and semantic relationship which holds between the two relevant component elements (i.e., V and P) of a P-V CV is maintained after compounding. That is, even though compounding can often bring about some change in the syntactic or semantic relationship between two components, the change usually involves the addition of a certain degree of abstractness but not a change in the original core relationship itself. Thus, we define P-V CVs in OE as compounds that result from combining an independent preposition and an independent verb.

As noted in Section 1, when P and V combine to form a P-V CV, the original NP object of P can become an argument of the CV. In this case, a given complex word can be considered a P-V CV only when the prefix has a pre-existing counterpart preposition which is closely related in form and meaning, while the basic meaning of the simplex verb is maintained.

can be found in many studies including Keenan & Comrie (1977, 1979), Comrie (1981: 148-155), and Pollard & Sag (1987: 67-72, 117-121, 1994). Note, however, that their hierarchies mainly based on grammatical functions are difficult to properly apply to the NP arguments which have the same grammatical function (i.e., the direct object) but alternative case markings, as is shown in (5)-(7). Thus, relative obliqueness here is defined with respect to the morphological cases of NP arguments rather than their grammatical roles or functions.

¹⁷ Case₁ < Case₂ means that Case₁ is less oblique than Case₂. Note that although passivization possibilities involve only non-subject cases, the nominative subject case is also included in the OH. This is mainly because passivization is generally an operation involving the subject and an object (of a verb) and the subject is often considered the least oblique in many syntactic frameworks. The distinction in obliqueness between dative and genitive is not as clear as the distinction between accusative and other object cases. The hierarchy (Dat ≤ Gen) mainly reflects the relative frequency of each case and relative passivization possibility. This seems to be also the case between ModE prepositional dative (*to* NP) and genitive (*of* NP).

Furthermore, an argument of a P-V CV can be determined to come from P only when we have enough evidence for the original subcategorization of that NP argument by P in terms of their semantic relationship and in many cases, the case government as well, and when it is clear that the argument does not come from the simplex verb. What this means is that at least in the case of P-V CVs, in order to say anything reasonable about the inheritance of an argument and its case, the basic pattern of the semantic relationship expressed by V and P should be maintained after V and P combine to form a P-V CV even if the CV comes to have a degree of abstract or figurative meaning through compounding. This is because only when there is a sufficient degree of transparency in the semantic and syntactic structure, can there be an objective criterion for determining the inheritance of the argument (and its case) in OE P-V CVs.¹⁸

Note that in spite of the inconsistent encoding of kinds of meaning or grammatical relationship in OE object cases, the distinction among cases or the relative obliqueness of NPs encoded in cases is very systematic and regular, because, as we already have seen, this difference in obliqueness among NPs is unexceptionally applied in determining the passivization possibilities of NP arguments. Thus, it is very likely that the obliqueness of NPs is more likely to be maintained in P-V compounding than any other semantic information.

There are several other reasons why the compounding of V and P in OE would not change the fundamental semantic relationship, especially the relative obliqueness among NPs. Above all, as we have already considered, prepositional arguments are more oblique than verbal arguments regardless of the cases involved. Then, it would be very unlikely for a transitive verb to subcategorize for (as its original complement) an argument which is less central for the meaning involved while, through compounding, inheriting a more central argument from other less central parts of a given sentence. On the contrary, the original argument of a simplex verb should still be more important or central for that verb and less oblique than the inherited prepositional argument even after V and P combine to form a P-V CV as long as the basic pattern of the original semantic structure is maintained. This conclusion would be more plausible if we consider that there was a

¹⁸ This might seem to be circular, but it is not, because my argument is based on morphology. Above all, what is clear is that only when there is a sufficient degree of transparency, at least, in the meaning of V and P, can we reasonably say anything about the subcategorization inheritance in P-V CVs.

higher degree of semantic and/or morpho-syntactic transparency in OE P-V CVs than in ModE P-V CVs.¹⁹

In this connection, there is one important thing about maintaining the obliqueness hierarchy (OH) among NPs especially when V inherits its second argument through P-Vt compounding. The obliqueness of an NP is encoded in its morphological case and the OH among NP arguments of the same governor is determined solely by their morphological cases, whereas a verbal argument is less oblique than a prepositional argument, regardless of their morphological cases. Thus, if an argument of P is inherited into the new argument structure of a P-Vt CV, then the OH between the (less oblique) original verbal argument and the (more oblique) original prepositional argument should be maintained in the new argument structure and, therefore, the case selected for the inherited prepositional argument should be one which does not change the original relative obliqueness between the two NP arguments. I believe that what is important here is maintaining the OH between the two NP arguments rather than preserving the original (surface) case of the prepositional argument, as we will consider later in this paper.

Most importantly, all the characteristics of OE NPs considered so far and their behavior are determined and controlled by the head (V). This is because it is the head itself that represents and encodes the syntactic and semantic relationship including the OH among its relevant arguments, by selecting relevant arguments of particular cases. This means that the head of OE P-V CVs has more significance than we have often assumed and suggests that the case government in OE P-V CVs can be explained by more properly reflecting the properties of the head as they are.

As for OE morphological cases and their inheritance in P-V CVs, in particular, if a certain case is not marked for a verb in its subcategorization and is less oblique than the case marked for the same verb in the lexicon, then the case in question is very likely to be negative in the sense that it does not occur with the given verb even through P-V compounding, as long as the compounding does not involve any significant change in the original fundamental syntactic and semantic relationship between the NP arguments involved. This is mainly because P-V compounding can help a relevant verb to inherit only a more oblique prepositional argument, as long

¹⁹ See Ogura (1995) for a discussion of some evidence about the transparency of OE P-V CVs.

as some other more important factor is not involved.²⁰ Thus, along with the OH in (13), I propose the following enriched interpretation of the notion of the head with respect to the case feature:

(14) An Enriched Interpretation of the Case Features of Old English Verbs

Any morpho-syntactic case (of an argument of a verb) which is unmarked in the subcategorization of a verb is *negative* if it is *less oblique*, and *potential* if it is *more oblique* than the morpho-syntactic case of an argument which is specified as a marked value in the subcategorization of the given verb.

(15) Informal Redefinition of the Argument Structure of Old English Verbs ²¹

- a. Auxiliary Verb [SUBCAT < NP [+nom], +VP >]
- b. V_i = V [SUBCAT < NP [+nom] >]
 = V [SUBCAT < NP [+nom], ((NP [$\dot{\iota}$ acc/ $\dot{\iota}$ dat / $\dot{\iota}$ gen])) >]
- c. $V[\text{acc}]$ = V [SUBCAT < NP [+nom], NP [+acc] >]
 = V [SUBCAT < NP [+nom], NP [+acc], ((NP [$\dot{\iota}$ dat / $\dot{\iota}$ gen])) >]
- d. $V[\text{dat}]$ = V [SUBCAT < NP [+nom], NP [+dat] >]
 = V [SUBCAT < NP [+nom], NP [+dat], ((NP [-acc, $\dot{\iota}$ gen])) >]
- e. $V[\text{gen}]$ = V [SUBCAT < NP [+nom], NP [+gen] >]
 = V [SUBCAT < NP [+nom], NP [+gen], ((NP [-acc, $\dot{\iota}$ dat])) >]
- f. Impersonal Verb [SUBCAT < (NP [-nom, + α]) >]
 = V [SUBCAT < (NP [-nom, + α]), ((NP [- β , $\dot{\iota}$ δ])) >],
 where [β] < [α] < [δ].

²⁰ In this connection, note that although a prepositional dative (e.g., *to NP* [DAT]) can be added to the ModE structure V + accusative NP (e.g., *told the story* [ACC]), as in *John told the story to Mary*, the accusative *the story* cannot be added to the ModE structure V + prepositional dative (e.g., *spoke to Mary* [DAT]), as in **I spoke to Mary the movie*, in which the prepositional genitive *about the movie* [GEN] is acceptable, as in *I spoke to Mary about the movie*.

²¹ The double parentheses indicate that relevant case features are specified but unmarked, inverted question mark ($\dot{\iota}$) means that relevant cases are not realized yet but are potential, and finally, the plus (+) and minus (-) indicate marked and negative cases, respectively.

For the representation of the subcategorization list of OE verbs, I generally follow the framework of Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG) in the version of Pollard & Sag (1987, 1994). Note that although HPSG has no treatment of 'potential (case) features,' there is nothing incompatible with such a proposal in that framework.

In the remainder of this paper, I will demonstrate that my proposal, which is based on relative obliqueness and the enriched interpretation of case features for OE verbs, is strongly supported by the extant OE data. In particular, I will show how my proposal can answer several interesting questions about the behavior of OE CVs, including the peculiar case government in *wiþ-bregdan*, *wiþ-cweþan*, and *wiþ-standan*, which do not seem to be answered satisfactorily in any previous studies.

3. Evidence for the Obliqueness Hierarchy

One clear prediction from my proposal is that if a simplex verb subcategorizes for only dative or genitive in the lexicon, then it will not inherit accusative through compounding and therefore a P-V CV formed by that verb and a preposition will not take accusative either even if the prefix (P) as a preposition can take accusative, because accusative is less oblique than either dative or genitive.

In order to verify this prediction, I have examined OE simplex verbs which govern dative or genitive. My list of dative- or genitive-governing verbs is based on Mitchell (1985: §1092), which is generally considered to be most complete. I have considered every genitive- or dative- governing simplex verb in the list and checked all the relevant verbs in order to see if any of them combines with a preposition to form a CV which takes a less oblique case than the case specified for the original simplex verb.²²

²² As for the question of what prefixes should be treated as prepositions, I assume that the prefix (P) of the P-V CV is a preposition (only) when it has the same form as an independent preposition and its meaning is closely related to that of the corresponding preposition. Thus, although I generally follow the criteria suggested in de la Cruz (1975) and Mitchell (1978) in this matter, I sometimes differ from them about the status of some individual prefixes or prepositions, especially when the given prefix shows the same or similar semantic and syntactic contribution as the corresponding preposition.

For instance, although the prefix *on-* is often meaningless and mostly corresponds to Old High German *int-* (or German *ent-*), which expresses the idea of escaping, going away, or removing something (Hall 1960, Bosworth & Toller 1898), we can also find many instances of the prepositional prefix *on-* with the meaning of the preposition *on* '(up)on, onto, against, toward, in respect to, or according to' (e.g., *on-a-sendan* 'to send into', *on(be)blawan* 'to blow upon/into', *on-bugan* 'to yield to', *on-hlinian* 'to lean on', *on-sawan* 'to introduce into', *on-sittan* 'to seat oneself in', *on-wadan* 'to penetrate into', etc.).

In particular, among about 180 verbs which are known to take dative or genitive, there are 112 simplex verbs (i.e., 37 verbs [gen] and 75 verbs [dat]), as given in (16) and (17) below. I have checked all those simplex verbs against Bosworth & Toller (1898), Toller (1921), Campbell (1972), and Hall (1960). The result: none of them make a P-V CV which takes a less oblique case than the case specified for the original simplex verb.

(16) Verbs [gen] and their Derivational Complex Verbs ²³

anþracian; basnian (ge-); blinnan (a-, ge-); blissian (efen-);
boetan; bon; dwellan (a-, ge-, ofa-); efestan; elcian; fæstan (a-,
ge-); (ge-)felan; (ge-)feon (efen-); frasian (ge-); friclan; giernan;
gilpan (for-); habban; hentan (ge-); hlosnian; latian (a-, ge-);
locian (ge-); ge-nugen (be-nugan); nyttian (ge-); pleon;
ge-restan; romian; sætan, sætian (be-, for-); sætnian (ge-); sciran
(a-); sinnan; slæpan (ge-, on-); þicgan (a-, ge-); þorfnian;
wædlian; wafian; wandian (a-, for-, un-); weddian (ge-).

(17) Verbs [dat / gen] and their Derivational Complex Verbs

andwyrðan (ge-); bican, bicanian (and-, ge-); bisenian, bysnian,
(ge-, mis-); brycian, brycsian (ge-); campian (ge-); (ge-)cidan
(be-, ofer-); geclifian; cweman (ge-, mis-); ge-dafenian; derian
(a-, ge-); dryman; dugan, dygan; earmian (of-); efnetan; eglan,
eglian (æt-, ge-); fægnian, fagnian (ge-, on-); feligean; ge-feolan

Similarly, although *be-* is often treated as an inseparable, non-prepositional prefix since it often gives an intensification to a verb or has a privative sense, the prefix shows the same or similar semantic and syntactic contribution as the corresponding preposition *be* 'by, around' in many instances (e.g., *be-bindan* 'to bind about', *be-cidan* 'to complain of', *be-faran* 'to go around', *be-licgan* 'to lie around', *be-sittan* 'to sit around', *be-smeagan* 'to consider about', etc.). Thus, this paper will treat *on-* and *be-* as prepositional prefixes when it is clear that they are closely related to the corresponding prepositions in their semantics or when the complex words (i.e., *be-V* or *on-V*) have the corresponding phrasal counterparts (i.e., *V+be* or *V+on*).

²³ The derived complex verb(s) is/are given in the parentheses following each simplex verb. Although many OE verbs considered here and their relevant examples are discussed in the remainder of this paper, the limited space does not allow all the verbs involved to be treated in detail. For relevant OE examples for the genitive- or dative-governing verbs, refer to Bosworth & Toller (1898), Visser (1963-73), and COE (= Venezky & Healey 1980), which contains all surviving OE material except some variant texts.

(æt-, be-, wip-); framian, fremian, fromian (forþ-); frodian; (ge-)fultuman, -ian (to(-ge)-); (ge-)fylstan (to-); geocian (un-); gitsian (ge-); godian; gramian; hearman (of-); (ge-)helpian (a-, to-); hiersumian (ge-); (ge-)hlystan (under-); hreman; hwopan; hyrian (æfter-, of-, on-); lapiān (a-); (ge-)leogan (a-, for-, of-); libban (mis-, ofer-); (ge-)lician (mis-, of-, un-ge-); (ge-)limpan (a-, be-, mis-); linnan (a-, ge-, b(e)-, of-); losian (ge-); lyffettan; magan; (ge-)metgian; migan (ge-); (ge-)miltisian; missan; (ge-)neþan; (ge-)nyhtsumian; ge-ortrewan; ge-ortruwian; plihtan; racian; (ge-)rædan (a-, be-, for-, mis-, wip-); (ge-)sælan (to-); sceadan; scrifan (ge-); spiwan, spiwian (a-); (ge-)spowan (mis-); stefnian (ge-); stelan (be-, ge-, for-); sweltan (a-, ge-, for-); (ge-)swican (a-, be-, from-); tidan (ge-, mis-); ge-timian (miss-timian); trucian (ge-); (ge-)þancian; þegan; þegnian (ge-, under-); þeowan, þeowian (be-, ge-, ni(e)d-); (ge-)þingian (for(e)-, oþ-); (ge-)þwærian (a-, mid-); (ge-)þyncan (mis-, of-, on-); (ge-)unan (of-); (ge-)wifian; wrixlan (be-, ge-).

Some interesting results from the investigation of the target data are the following. First, it has been found that most of the target verbs do not form many compound or complex verbs. Thus, as the lists given in (16) and (17) above show, they usually have no more than one or two derivational complex verbs, which in most cases are not P-V CVs but just combinations of an inseparable prefix (e.g., *a-*, *ge-*, *mis-*, etc.) and a given simplex verb. Note that this unproductivity in compounding is well predicted by the proposed interpretation of case features, because dative- or genitive-governing simplex verbs have only genitive or dative as their potential case(s), as is shown in (15). This becomes more interesting if we note that many intransitive or accusative-governing simplex verbs form a lot of complex verbs, many of which are P-V CVs, as follows: ²⁴

²⁴ The productivity of a Vi and Vt in compounding is also predicted by the given proposal. For example, a Vi has as its SUBCAT value "V [SUBCAT < NP [+nom], ((NP [iacc / i-dat / i-gen])) >]" and so it has an accusative, dative or genitive NP as its potential argument, which can be provided by almost any OE preposition and its object NP without destroying the original relative obliqueness among the NP arguments involved.

(18) Old English Intransitive Verbs and their Derivational Complex Verbs

a. *cuman* 'to come'

a-, an-, be-, for-, fore-, forþ-, ge-, in-, of-, ofer-, ofer-be-,
on-be-, ongean-, þurh-, to-, to-be-, under-, up-cuman

b. *cweþan* 'to say, speak' (also as a transitive verb)

a-, æfter-, be-, bi-, for-, fore-, ge-, hearm-, on-, onbe-,
onge-, to-, wiþ-, wearg-, wiþer-, yfel-cweþan

c. *faran* 'to travel'

a-, be-, for-, forþ-, ge-, geond-, in-, of-, ofer-, on-, oþ-,
þurh-, to-, ut-, wiþ-, ymb-faran

d. *gangan* 'to go'

a-, æt-, be-, bi-, for-, fore-, forþ-, ful-, ge-, in-, of-, ofer-,
on-, ongean-, þurh-, to-, under-, up-, ut-, wiþ-, ymb-,
ymb-gangan

(19) Old English Monotransitive Verbs and their Derivational Complex Verbs

a. *don* 'to do, make'

a-, be-, for-, ge-, in-ge-, of-, of-a-, ofer-, on-, on-ge-, oþ-,
to-, to-ge-, un-, under-, up-a-, ut-a-, wel-, yfel-don

b. *habban* 'to have'

a-, æt-, be-, for-, ge-, of-, on-, wiþ-, wiþer-, ymb-habban

c. *healdan* 'to hold'

a-, æt-, an-, be-, for-, ge-, mis-, of-, ofer-, on-, oþ-, to-,
ymb-healdan

d. *settan* 'to set, place'

a-, an-, be-, bi-, for-, fore-, ge-, in-, of-, ofer-, on-, to-,
un-, wiþ-, ymb-settan

Second, none of the P-V CVs which come from the given dative- or genitive-governing verbs have turned out to take a less oblique case (i.e., accusative) than the case specified for the relevant simplex verb. For example, *ge-feolan* 'to stick to', which is one of the dative-governing OE verbs, has *be-feolan* 'to apply oneself to' as a derivational complex verb and this complex verb *be-feolan* never takes an accusative NP object but always takes a dative NP object, as in (21):

(20) *ge-feolan*

- a. Swa mycele ma he *gefealh* mid *geornnysse* *þam gebedum*
 so much more he stuck to with zeal the prayers [dat]
 'thus, he stuck to the prayers much more zealously' (GD i. 74.14)
- b. he þa se halga wer *gefealh* *his gebede* mycle
 he then the holy man stuck to his prayer [dat/gen] much
 geornlicor, þonne he ær gewunode
 more zealously than he before got used
 'then he adhered to his prayer much more zealously
 than before he got used to it' (GD ii. 125.28)

(21) *be-feolan*

- a. Ne mæg ic *ðære stiðnysse* *be-feolan*, þe ðu
 not can I the severity [dat] apply myself to, to which you
 me totihst;
 me urge
 'I cannot submit to the strictness to which you urge me'
 (ÆCHom ii. 374.15)
- b. eall sio gioguð ðe nu is on Angeleynne friora monna,
 all the youth who now is in England of free men
 ðara ðe ða speda hæbben ðæt hie *ðæm*
 who the riches have that they it [dat]
be-feolan mægen sien to liornunga oðfæste,
 devote themselves to can be to learning set
 'all the young people who are now in England of free men,
 who are rich enough to be able to devote themselves to it,
 should be set to learning' (CP 7.11)

The case government of *be-feolan* is interesting because although its prefix *be-* as a preposition can take an accusative NP object, along with a dative object, as in (22) below, (and therefore its government of accusative case is expected), the complex verb itself never takes an accusative object.

(22) *be*

- a. Gregorius awrat *be* *sumum geðvldigan were*, Stephanus
 Gregory wrote about some patient man [dat] Stephen
 gehaten,
 called
 'Gregory wrote of a patient man, named Stephen'
 (ÆCHom ii. 546.14)

- b. Nu is to besceawigenne humeta se Ælmihtiga God,
 now is to consider why the Almighty God
be his gecorenan and ða gelufedan ðenas, ... geðafað þæt
 about his chosen and the beloved servants [acc] allows that
 hi mid swa micclum witum beon fornumene and
 they with so many pains be destroyed and
 tobrytte ...
 broken ...
 'now it is to be considered why the Almighty God allows that
 his chosen and beloved servants, ... be destroyed and broken
 with so many pains' (ÆCHom i. 486.17)

One may want to argue that the limited case government in which *be-feolan* never takes an accusative object is due to the fact that the preposition *be* doesn't often take an accusative object (cf. Mitchell 1985: §1183). However, such an argument will be difficult to maintain if we consider the case government of other derivational P-V CVs of *ge-feolan*. In fact, *ge-feolan* has two other derivational P-V CVs *æt-feolan* 'to adhere to' and *wip-feolan* 'to devote oneself to' and both of them always take a dative NP object, as in (23) and (24), respectively:

(23) *æt-feolan*

- a. *Æt-feole min tunge fæste gomum*
 adhered to my tongue firmly entertainment [dat]
 'my tongue firmly adhered to entertainment' (PPs 136.5)
- b. Eow is micel ðearf ðæt ge swa *æt-feolan*
 to you is much necessary that you so apply yourselves to
 ut ðære lare,
 outwardly the teaching [dat]
 'it is very necessary that you so apply yourselves outwardly to
 the teaching' (CP 375.5)

(24) *wip-feolan*

- þa he ða ongeat ðæt he ðære godspellican lare
 when he then perceived that he the evangelical teaching [dat]
 georne *wip-fealh*
 eagerly applied himself to
 'when he perceived that he eagerly devoted himself to the
 evangelical teaching [dat]'

(Bosworth & Toller 1898, p.1253: *wip-feolan*)²⁵

Note that although neither of the above two P-V CVs take an accusative object, either of the prefixes *æt-* and *wiþ-* of the two P-V CVs as a preposition can take an accusative NP object, along with other cases, as in (25) and (26) below. Moreover, their accusative case government is well attested.

(25) *æt*

- a. Ic het eow mine frynd, forðan ðe ic eow cydde
 I called you my friend because I to you made known
 ealle ða ðing þe ic *æt minum Fæder* gehyrde.
 all the thing that I from my Father [dat] heard
 'I have called you my friends, because I have made known unto
 you all the things that I have heard from my Father'

(ÆCHom ii. 524.8-9)

- b. þæt seo is nu get *æt þisne andweardan dæg*
 that it is now yet at this present day [acc]
 mid manegum godcundum wuldrum swiþe healice geweorþod
 with many divine glories very highly honored
 for mana eagam.
 before men's eyes
 'that at this present day it is still very highly honored with
 many divine glories before the eyes of men' (BIHom 125.16-18)

(26) *wiþ*

- a. Ac hwæt is þæt þam men sy mare þearf to þencenne
 but what is that for the man is more needful to think
 þonne embe his sawle þearfe, & hwone se dæg cume
 than about his soul's need and when the day comes
 þe he sceole *wiþ þam lichomon* hine gedælon,
 that he must from the body [dat] himself separate
 'but what is more needful for a man to think of than about his
 soul's need and of the day that comes when he must separate
 himself from the body?' (BIHom 97.18-21)

²⁵ COE (= Venezky & Healey 1980), which is known to contain almost all surviving OE material, does not have any example of this CV. The sole example in which the CV takes dative is found in Bosworth & Toller (1898).

- b. and he genealæhte þam lifleasan men, and hine unwurðne
 and he approached the lifeless man and him unworthy
 of deaðe arærde, þurh his ðingrædne *wið*
 from death raised through his intercession with
þone soðan God
 the true God [acc]
 'and he approached the lifeless man and raised him unworthy
 from death through his intercession with the true God'
 (ÆCHom ii. 504.35)

The case government of the three derivational P-V CVs of the dative-governing verb *ge-feolan* will be more interesting if we note that many P-V CVs formed by an intransitive simplex verb and a preposition often take an accusative NP object. Thus, the P-V CV *for-faran*, which comes from the preposition *for(e)* [dat/acc] 'before' and the intransitive verb *faran* 'to go', takes an accusative NP object, as in (27), and the P-V CV *þurh-creopan*, which comes from the preposition *þurh* [dat/acc] 'through' and the intransitive verb *creopan* 'to creep', takes an accusative NP object, as in (28).

(27) *faran* and *for-faran*

- a. hyra gehwylc *faran* scolde to læranne
 their each go should to teach
 'each of them should go to teach' (BIHom 229. 5)
- b. wolde hine *for-faran* georne
 would him [acc] destroy (< before-go) eagerly
 '(he) wished to destroy him eagerly' (WHom 222. 48)

(28) *creopan* and *þurh-creopan*

- a. he næfþ his fota gewæld and onginþ *creopan*
 he not-has his feet control and begins to-creep
 on þone ilcan weg
 in the same way
 'he does not have the control of his feet and begins to creep in
 the same way' (Bo 107.13)
- b. ðæt melo *þurh-crypp* ælc þvre
 the meal through-creeps each hole [acc]
 'the meal passes through each hole'

(Bosworth & Toller 1898, p.1078: *þurh-creopan*)

This fact, together with the finding that the P-V CVs formed by a genitive- or dative-governing simplex verb and a preposition do not take an accusative NP object, shows that the OH plays an important role in OE P-V compounding.

Third, there are a few derivational complex verbs or P-V CVs which may appear to take a case which is less oblique than the case specified for the given genitive- or dative-governing simplex verb. However, none of them are problematic, because their simplex verbs take genitive or dative only when they have a special (non-default) meaning while, with a default meaning, they are mainly used as a transitive verb [acc], which in fact participates in the compounding in question. Consider the following examples, in which the simplex verb *picgan* 'to partake of' takes genitive, as in (29a), while the complex verb *oþ-picgan* 'to take a thing from a person' takes accusative and dative at the same time, as in (29b):

(29) *picgan* and *oþ-picgan*

- a. Ne wæs þæt wyrd þa gen þæt he ma moste
 not was that fate still (so) that he more be allowed
manna cynnes *picgean* ofer þa niht
 man-kind [gen] partake of beyond that night
 'his fate was no longer that he would be allowed to partake of
 mankind after that night' (Beo 734-6)
- b. Him on leodscære frumbearnas riht
 him [dat] in nation first-born child's right [acc]
 freobroðor *oþ-þah*
 own brother took
 'his own brother took his birthright in the nation from him'
 (Ex 337-8)

This may seem to be a counterexample since the complex verb takes less oblique cases than the genitive case specified for the simplex verb. However, the simplex *picgan* takes genitive only when it means 'to partake of' but, with the (default) meaning 'to take', it is used as a transitive verb [acc], as in (30) below. Note that the accusative NP argument of the complex verb comes from the latter use of the simplex verb, which is clear from the meaning of *oþ-picgan* 'to take a thing [acc] from a person [dat].'

(30) *þicgan* 'to take'

- a. He him brad syleþ lond to leane he hit on lust
 he him broad gives land as gift he it [acc] in pleasure
þigeþ
 takes
 'he gives broad land to him as gift, (and) he takes it with
 pleasure' (Fort 75-76)
- b. Cwæþ he his sylfes suna syllan wolde ...
 said he his own son give would ...
 Hie ða lac hraðe *þegon* to þance
 they the gift [acc] soon took thankfully
 'he said he would give his own son ...
 they immediately accepted the gift thankfully' (And 1112)

Another interesting point in this connection is that the OH is also generally observed in most complex verbs which are not P-V CVs but come from the combination of an inseparable prefix and a genitive- or dative-governing simplex verb. That is, as long as the basic semantic relationship expressed by the simplex verb is maintained after compounding, those complex verbs avoid taking or composing a less oblique case by taking genitive or dative. Thus, the complex verb *mis-limpan* 'to turn out badly for someone,' which comes from the dative-governing simplex verb *limpan* 'to befall someone,' always takes a dative NP, as in (32):

(31) (*ge-*)*limpan*

- a. Hu *lomp* eow on lade leofa Biowulf ... ?
 how befell you [dat] upon voyage dear Beowulf
 'how did you fare, dear Beowulf ... ?' (Beo 1987)
- b. Him ðær wirse *ge-lamp*
 him [dat] there worse befell
 'something worse happened to him there' (Sat 24)

(32) *mis-limpan*

- a. Ac se þe geð into fihte wip-ute heretoche
 but he who goes into fight without leader
him mai sone *mis-limpe*
 him [dat] may soon turn out unfortunately
 'but he who goes into fight without a leader, it may soon turn
 out badly to him' (Lamb.Hom 243.18)

wiþ ðone mon.

with the man [acc]

'how much more the man's body can be compared with his mind than the mouse is compared with the man' (Bo 36.2)

- (ii) Ne sint hi no *wið* eow to *metanne*
 nor are they [nom] not with you [acc/dat] to compare
 'they are not to be compared with you' (Bo 29.3)

- b. þu gedydest ðæt we *metan* ure land
 you caused that we measure our land [acc]
mid rapum,
 with cords [dat]
 'you caused us to measure our land with cords' (Ps 15.6)

(34) *wiþ-metan*

- a. hwylcūm bigspelle *wiþ-mete* we hit?
 which parable [dat] compare we it [acc]
 'which parable shall we compare it with?' (Mk 4.30)
- b. Drihten nis na oðrum mannum to *wið-metenne*.
 the Lord [nom] is-not no other men [dat] to compare-with
 'the Lord is not to be compared with other men'
 (ÆCHom ii. 230.24-25)

The examples in (33) above show that *metan* 'to measure, compare' usually takes an accusative NP and often occurs with a preposition *wiþ* or *mid* 'with' and a prepositional object NP, which is usually accusative or dative. When the simplex verb *metan* combines with the preposition *wiþ* to make a P-Vt CV, the whole P-Vt CV *wiþ-metan* 'to compare/measure one thing [acc] with/by another [dat]' becomes ditransitive and always takes accusative and dative, as in (34). Note that one of the two (non-subject) NP arguments of *wiþ-metan* comes from P (nonhead) and that this prepositional argument is the dative NP but not the accusative NP, because it is what something is compared with.

Here, we have to explain why the P-V CV *wiþ-metan* only takes accusative and dative on its two objects, although the prefix *wiþ* as a preposition takes accusative, dative, or genitive, as is shown in (4) of the first section. According to the enriched interpretation of OE case feature given in (15), the simplex verb *metan* [acc], whose case feature can be described as V [+nom, +acc, λ dat, λ gen], has the potential for inheriting a

more oblique argument than its original accusative argument, and thus it comes to choose dative from among the actually possible options (i.e., [acc] and [dat]).²⁶

Consider the following examples, in which some specific case taken by a complex verb does not come from either the simplex verb or the prefix:

(35) *on-cweðan*

- a. *þæt hio þære cwene on-cweðan meahton*
 that they the woman [dat] speak-with-respect-to could
swa tiles, swa trages,
 such good [gen], such bad [gen]
 'that they could answer the woman with respect to either such
 a good thing or such a bad thing' (El 324)
- b. He stille gebad ares spræce and
 he quietly waited for angel's speech and
þam engle on-cwæð
 to the angel [dat] spoke-in-response
 'he quietly waited for the angel's speech and spoke to the
 angel' (Gen 2910)

(36) *cweðan*

- a. in leohte him þa word *cweþað*
 in light him [dat] those words [acc] speak
 'they will speak those words to him in glory' (Christ 401)
- b. *þa cweð ðaem eorð-crypple*
 then spoke to the crippled [dat]
 'then (he) said to the crippled man' (Mt 9.6)
- c. *Ac cweð þin word* and min cniht byð gehæled;
 but say the word [acc] and my servant shall be healed
 'but say the word, and my servant will be healed' (Lk 7.7)

On-cweðan 'to respond to somebody [dat] with respect to something [gen]' takes dative and genitive at the same time or dative alone, as in (35), whereas the simplex verb takes accusative and dative at the same

²⁶ The extant OE data seem to show that when the proposition *wiþ* occurs with *metan*, it only takes accusative or dative but does not take genitive even though it is possible with other verbs.

time or separately, as in (36), but does not take genitive. In the same way, *on-leon* 'to give somebody [dat] the loan of something [gen]' in (37) takes dative and genitive while the simplex *leon* does not take genitive but does take accusative and dative, as in (38):

(37) *on-leon*

- a. *ða metod on-lah Medum and Persum aldordomes*
 the Lord lent Medes and Persians [dat] power [gen]
ymb lytel fæc,
 after little interval
 'the Lord granted dominion to the Medes and Persians for a short period' (Dan 680)
- b. *Me lifes on-lah se pis leoht onwrah,*
 me [dat] life [gen] granted he who this light revealed
 'he who revealed (to us) this light granted life to me' (Rim 1)

(38) *leon*

- a. *Næs þæt þonne mætost mægen-fultuma,*
 not-was that then the least mighty aid
þæt him on ðearfe lah ðyle Hroðgares;
 that [dat] him [dat] in need lent spokesman of Hrothgar
 'then it was not the least of the might aid, that Hrothgar's spokesman lent him in need' (Beo 1455-1456)
- b. *& gaeð to him æd middernæht & cuoðes him la*
 and goes to him at midnight and says to him oh
freond lih & sel me ðreo hlafas.
 friend lend and give me [dat] three breads [acc]
 'and (he) goes to his friend at midnight and says to him, behold! friend, lend and give me three loaves of bread' (Lk 11.5)

Thus, we have to explain why the genitive case is used in both P-V CVs. One might expect that the genitive case for *on-cweðan* comes from the prefix *on-*. However, the government of genitive by the preposition *on*, which normally takes dative or accusative, is not well attested.²⁷ According

²⁷ But see Mitchell (1979: 40, fn. 2) for two examples in which *on* might be

to our proposal, the genitive case alone is allowed in both complex verbs *on-cweðan* and *on-leon* because only genitive is more oblique than the dative case which is specified for each of the simplex verbs involved.

Finally, I will consider the question raised about *wiþ*-CVs in the first section and see how our proposal can answer the question. The question is why a particular case is used in a P-V CV when more than one case is logically possible. Consider the following case government patterns for *wiþ-cweþan*, *wiþ-bregdan*, and *wiþ-standan*:

(39) Case Government of [*wiþ*-Vt] CVs, [Vt], and [*wiþ*]²⁸

- a. *wiþ-bregdan* [dat, (gen)] 'to restrain (sb/sth) [dat] from (sth)[gen]'
wiþ-cweþan [dat, (gen)] 'to refuse (sth) [gen] to (sb) [dat]'
wiþ-standan [dat, (gen)] 'to hinder (sb/sth) [dat] with respect to (sth) [gen]'
- b. *bregdan* [acc/dat] 'to draw, bend'
cweþan [acc, (dat)] 'to say, speak'
standan ([dat]) 'to stand, become'
- c. *wiþ* [acc/dat/gen]

The above case government patterns of OE P-V CVs show us some peculiar behavior in their case government. When they are used ditransitively, all the CVs in (39) take only [dat, gen] but they fail to take other combinations of cases, even though these are logically possible: [acc, acc], [acc, dat], [acc, gen], [dat, acc], [dat, dat]. How can we explain the case-government pattern in these P-Vt CVs?

According to the enriched interpretation of case feature proposed, no CVs can take an argument whose morpho-syntactic case is negative in the subcategorization of its head (simplex verb) through compounding. Thus,

considered to take genitive.

On the other hand, one may want to treat *on-* here as a non-prepositional, inseparable prefix (cf. de la Cruz 1975). However, the prefix *on-* here seems to have the same semantic contribution as the corresponding preposition *on* '(up)on, in respect to, or according to', whereas the inseparable prefix *on-* is often meaningless or expresses the idea of escaping or removing something. Furthermore, note that even if it turns out to be a non-prepositional prefix, we still have to explain why the two complex verbs take not only dative but also genitive which does not come from the given simplex verbs.

²⁸ This is based on Mitchell (1985: §§1092, 1178), Visser (1963-73: §677), Bosworth & Toller (1898), and Toller (1921). For a detailed discussion of OE P-V CVs including these three, see Kim (1997).

even if the nonhead P originally governs a certain case, if that case is less oblique than the marked case specified for the head, then it is negative and therefore cannot be inherited by the head or be percolated to the mother (CV). Note that in all three CVs, the dative case comes from the verb part (V), which is clear from the relevant meaning and the fact that the remaining case is genitive, which can be taken only by the P *wip*. Remember also that V [dat] is equal to V [+dat, ((-acc, ↓gen))] in the enriched interpretation of the case feature. Therefore, the only possible option for the second argument which comes from the P should be the genitive case, which gives the argument structure V [dat, gen] for each P-Vt CV.

Then, why don't the above CVs take [acc, acc], [acc, dat], [dat, dat] or [acc, gen]? This can also be easily explained. Consider the following example again:

(40) *cweðan* and *wip-cweðan* (repeated from (3))

- a. in leohte him þa word *cweþað*
 in light him [dat] those words [acc] speak
 'they will speak those words to him in glory' (Christ 401)
- b. gif inc hwa ðæs *wip-cweþe*
 if you-two [dat] anyone that [gen] contradicts
 'if anyone contradicts you about that' (BIHom 71.1)

The argument structures for *cwean* and *wip-cweðan* are "addressee [dat], what-is-said [acc]," and "addressee [dat], what-is-spoken-about [gen]," respectively, which is apparent from the above examples in (39). Note that an addressee generally takes dative. Thus, once the case of the first NP (i.e., the original verbal argument) is determined as dative, the only remaining choice becomes genitive since genitive alone is more oblique than dative and potential in the case feature of the head verb. Also note that all three *wip*-CVs have similar semantic and syntactic structures with a little difference in meaning in the verb part. Thus, even though more than one morphological case is logically possible, we can predict the right choice.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have shown that relative obliqueness is one main factor

which, along with grammatical roles or functions, determines the case government in OE verbs. In particular, I have proposed a principled account of the case government of OE verbs which is based on the OH (obliqueness hierarchy) and the resultant, enriched interpretation of OE case features. In short, this approach, if it can be applied more generally, should enable us to provide a reasonable explanation and prediction about case government in OE, as we have seen in the previous section, and the prediction could contribute to the understanding of OE by accounting for many evasive grammatical relationships in which OE NPs and CVs are involved.

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ABSTRACT

What Really Determines Case Government in Old English?

Gwang-Yoon Goh

This paper addresses the issue of what, besides grammatical roles or functions, determines the case government of Old English (OE) verbs by explaining what really distinguishes each OE morphological case. On the basis of the distinctions in passivization possibilities in OE, I propose an 'obliqueness hierarchy' among OE NP arguments, which results in an enriched interpretation of the case features of OE verbs, and then show that relative obliqueness plays a central role in the case government of OE verbs. I also explain many interesting examples of OE case government including the question of why a certain case is used for a preposition-verb compound verb when more than one case is logically possible.

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